

## **Illinois Fall Color Report – October 1, 2021**



### **Northern Illinois**

As is often the case as September turns to October, the colors of fall (and harvest season) are slow on the uptake in much of Illinois, including many northern counties. Red maples are starting to turn purple and red. Honey locusts and cottonwoods are turning yellow. Some cottonwoods are losing their leaves. There are also some walnut leaves that are yellowing, but most trees are still green.

In areas of northeast Illinois, sassafras is beginning to blush orangish red in some locations, primarily in the understory where light is more limited. Mulberry is just beginning to show a yellowing, while catalpa is still transitioning to yellow, as are cottonwood and aspen. Many of the black walnuts at the forest edge have complete defoliation, although within the canopy there are many still hanging on in yellow. Oaks and hickories are sporadic and just starting to make a bit of color.

In some northwest Illinois locales, hackberry, walnut, locusts and some of the hickories are showing the colors of a dull to a bright yellow on the ridgetops. Dogwoods on the forest edges are showing a nice light red or orange color. If you happen to have pumpkin fields (depending on the variety) there may be some nice bright orange color on the ground. The grass prairies are showing a light tinge of orange to red on the stems. More color should be forthcoming during the next two weeks.

### **Central Illinois**

A few hints of fall color are appearing in areas of central Illinois. Spotters report a few yellows in the redbuds (below) and some reds in the sumacs.



Oak and hickory leaves are still green, but the forest is seeing yellow and brown with hints of the oaks beginning their change. There appears to be a bit more color beginning to show in urban areas than rural. Community forests are seeing yellow in cottonwoods, some yellow among walnut leaves, a bit of red and red/orange in red and sugar maples, flowering dogwoods showing some red, elms showing a bit of yellow, and yellow poplars are showing yellow leaves.



Some yellow and brown is showing on horse chestnuts. Sycamores are showing a bit of yellow at their tops (below).



In east central Illinois, black walnuts are turning yellow, with cottonwoods turning a dull yellow in some locations.

### **Southern Illinois**

Southern Illinois leaf watchers, as expected, report the switch from September to October arrives with a mainly green view on trees throughout the region.

In southeast Illinois this week, there has been a bit of color change. Sassafras and persimmon are showing obvious purple, yellow, and orange. The small tree/shrub Devil's walking stick (the plant with the largest leaves in Illinois) show leaves that are quite purple. Elsewhere, some yellowing is showing in walnut and cottonwood trees, especially where the weather has been dry. Some oranges and reds are showing in sassafras on the edge of woods.

Be patient. Fall colors are coming!